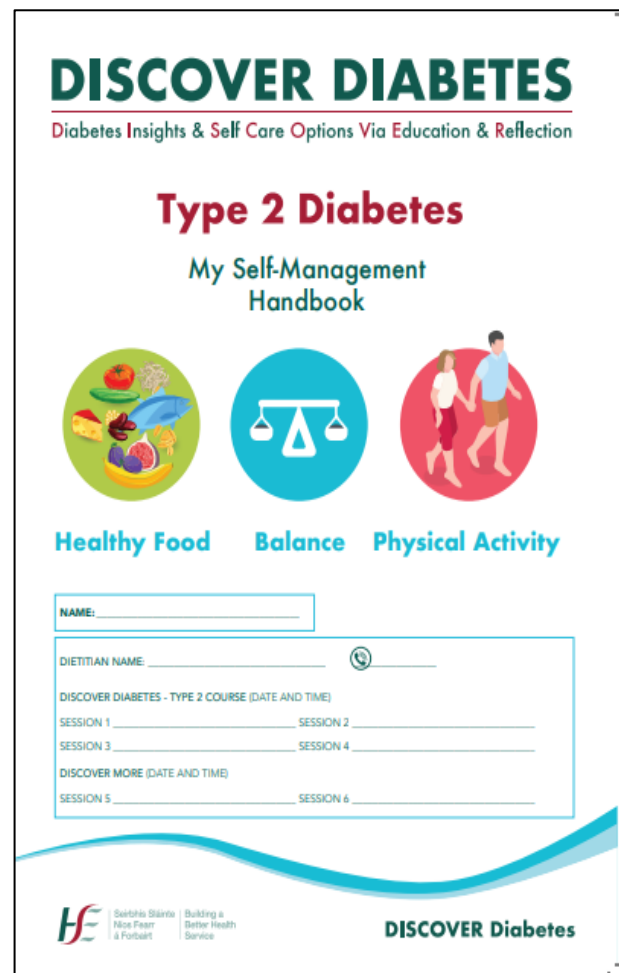


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BACKGROUND & AIM

The DISCOVER DIABETES – Type 2 (DDT2) programme is a one year type 2 diabetes self-management education and support programme (DSMES). It is available as an in-person or online programme. The in-person programme is a weekly 2.5 hour session for 4 weeks, with 6 and 12 month follow up sessions. The online programme is a weekly 1.5 hour session for 6 weeks, with 6 and 12 month follow ups. It is a community based clinical intervention delivered by trained dietitians in their ICPCD hub community specialist teams. It achieved QISMET accreditation in 2023.

DDT2 course recruitment methods vary across regions and may involve phone calls, letters and flyers. Many people struggle to access, understand, and apply health information. This has important negative implications in the form of lower service engagement and poorer health outcomes. Reviewing DDT2 letters was agreed to be a priority for 2025 by the national ICPCD Self Management Education Office and the national DDT2 Implementation Group. This project forms part of that initiative. The aim was to use HSE Communicating Clearly Guidelines(1) and WHO Considerations for Better Letters(2) to improve the way we communicate with people living with type 2 diabetes in the area covered by the Louth ICPCD Hub and to increase attendance rates for the DDT2 programmes in 2025.



COMMON PROBLEMS WITH HEALTH LETTERS (WHO, 2024)

- They are written from the perspective of the sender rather than the reader.
- They focus on regulations or guidelines, which are more important to the sender than the recipient.
- The desired action from the recipient is not clear.
- They use complicated language or terminology.
- They are too long.
- They are not engaging.
- They do not use evidence-based techniques to stimulate positive behaviour.



METHODS

The original DDT2 invitation letter and flyer used were reviewed and revised using the HSE Communicating Clearly Guidelines and the WHO Guidelines. Four of the nine WHO Considerations for Better Letters were prioritised for implementation in this phase of the project. These were:

- ensure a clear call to action
- attract the reader's attention
- keep the letter short and simple
- test the letter and engage with intended recipients

An updated flyer (Figure 1) & invitation letters were sent to people living with type 2 diabetes who were on the waiting list for 3 DDT2 courses in July to September 2025;

A set of questions were designed to assess the views of course attendees on:

- the clarity and readability of the communication they received;
- their emotional response when they received it;
- their preferences for email versus postal communication.

Permission was sought from all attendees during one session on each of the 3 courses for their involvement in small focus groups to provide feedback on the communication they received using the set of questions designed in advance.

RESULTS

Full registration was achieved for the 3 DDT2 courses (n=34). 68% of those registered were aged 18-64 years and 32% aged 65+ years.

100% of those who registered for the courses attended one or more sessions (n=34). This compares to 88% from the DDT2 National Pilot Audit Report (3).

All attendees present for the session that included focus group work were happy to participate (n=29).

100% of those who participated in the focus groups reported clear understanding of the communication materials, the course details, and booking procedures (Figure 2).

Attendees reported a strong preference for postal communication rather than emails. Only 7% (n=2) stated they would prefer email communication about DDT2 programmes.

Figure 2 – focus group results

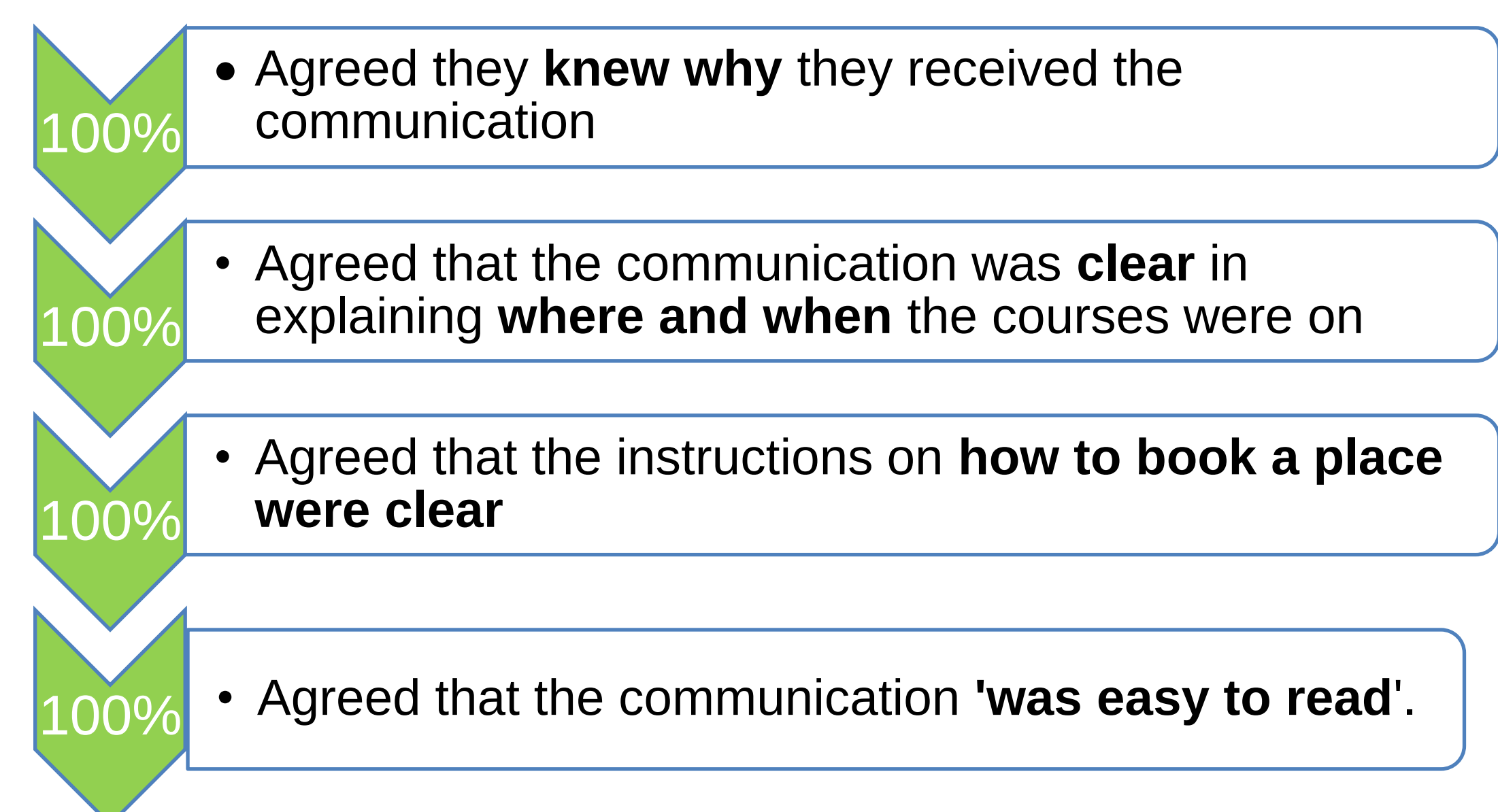


Figure 1 – DDT2 Programme Flyer Louth ICPCD 2025

'DISCOVER DIABETES TYPE 2' COURSES

Call us to book your place on one of our FREE courses this Summer:

'DISCOVER DIABETES – Type 2'

- A group course
- Relaxed and enjoyable
- A family member, carer or friend is welcome to attend with you. Just book place for them.
- Each course has 4 sessions over 4 consecutive weeks
- Each session lasts 2.5 hours

To book your place, phone Breda at 041 6860766 before Friday June 6th. Please leave a message with the following details:

- Your name & phone number.
- Which course you want to book – Dundalk or Drogheda

This course will help you:

- Understand your diabetes more
- Find out how food and lifestyle can affect your diabetes
- Prevent diabetes-related health problems
- Manage your weight
- Improve your overall health

Dundalk:

STARTS: Monday June 30th

FROM: 3.30pm to 6pm

IN: Dundalk Library, Roden Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91 RC44

The course will run every Monday afternoon for 4 weeks from June 30th– July 21st.

Drogheda:

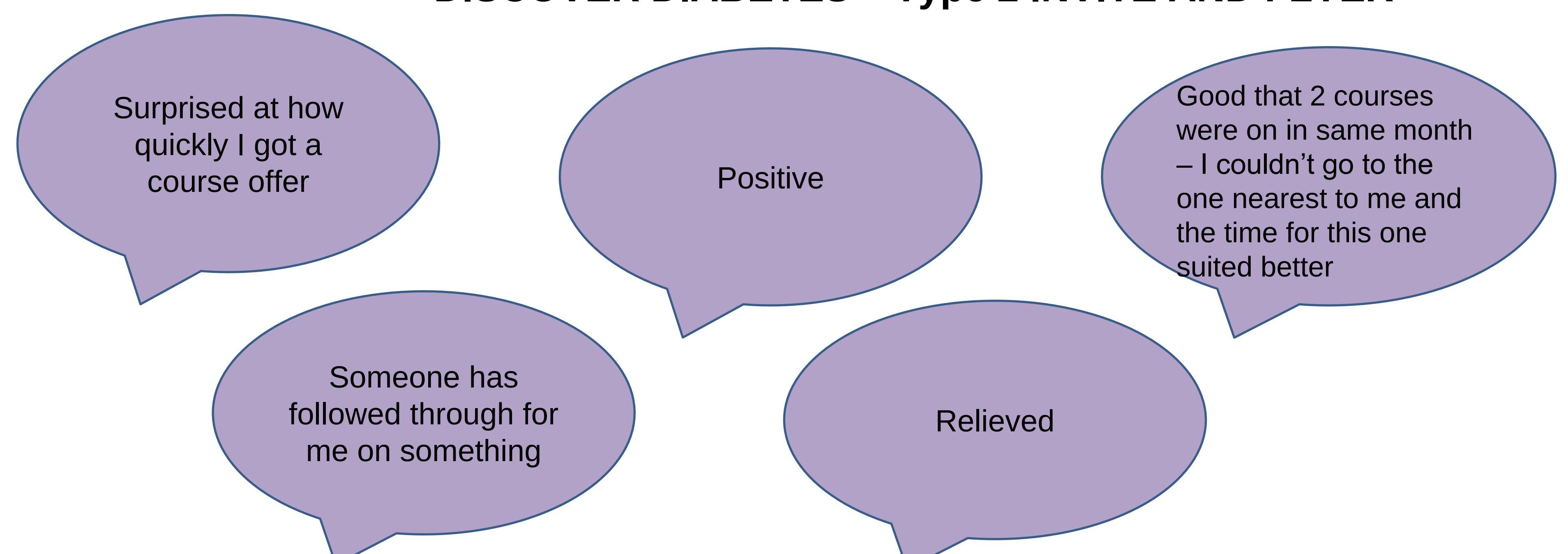
STARTS: Wednesday July 2nd

FROM: 10.00am to 12.30 pm

IN: Boyne Primary Care, Patrick St, Drogheda, Co. Louth A92F4EV

The course will run every Wednesday morning for 4 weeks from July 2nd to July 23rd.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES ON RECEIVING THE DISCOVER DIABETES – Type 2 INVITE AND FLYER



CONCLUSIONS

Implementing HSE and WHO guidelines in DDT2 communication materials improved clarity which led to full registration and high attendance. User testing confirmed that the revised materials were positively received and understood correctly by people living with type 2 diabetes. When healthcare services communicate clearly this facilitates people accessing their recommended DSMES care in a timely manner through improved efficiency in recruitment, with potential to optimise their treatment and improve clinical and psychosocial outcomes as evidenced by the DDT2 Pilot Audit (3)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

People living with type 2 diabetes who participated in the focus groups. DISCOVER DIABETES –Type 2 Implementation Group of community dietitians. Admin support: Breda Byrne.

References:

- Guidelines for Communicating Clearly using Plain English with our Patients and Service Users (HSE 2018);
- Better letters – evidence and considerations from the behavioural sciences (WHO Policy Brief 2024);
- Harrington, K, McGowan, C and Humphreys, M (2024) DISCOVER DIABETES – Type 2 Pilot Audit Evaluation Report, www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/diabetes/resources/diabetes-workstreams/discover-diabetes-type-2-smes-programme-evaluation-report-2024.pdf